



Republican Policy Committee

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Clinton Unfurled

Flag Wavering at the White House

As governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton signed into law in 1989 a bill prohibiting the intentional desecration of the flag. When the Supreme Court declared that law, and others like it unconstitutional, Governor Clinton instituted an award winning "flag respect" program in Arkansas state schools.

On February 11, 1991, Arkansas became the eleventh of 49 states to "urge the Congress of the United States to propose an amendment to the United States Constitution, for ratification by the states, specifying that the Congress and the states shall have the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States." While Governor Clinton was not required to sign the legislation, in stark contrast to Clinton's current public opposition, he did nothing to defeat the resolution.

When asked about flag-burning during an MTV appearance on June 16, 1992, then-candidate Clinton stated he "disagree[s] with it [flag burning] but I don't favor the constitutional amendment."

Less than three months later, speaking before a key Presidential campaign audience, the American Legion convention, candidate Clinton stated that "in 1989, when the flag-burning controversy arose, I joined with the American Legion in taking steps to react. I signed legislation outlawing flag burning or defacing the flag." Bob Spanogle, national adjutant and chief of staff for the American Legion stated he and the 10,000-plus attendees believed that support of the proposed constitutional amendment was exactly "what he [candidate Clinton] was referring to," according to the June 6, 1995 *Washington Times*.

In fact, according to the June 6, 1995, *Washington Post*, Thomas Haynes, who worked with the American Legion on the flag issue, was asked to help in drafting language for the Clinton speech. Haynes said the speech was kept vague "for political purposes." But, "we were told it was supposed to mean that he disagreed with the Supreme Court decision [overturning laws banning flag burning] and recognized there was only one way to overturn that and a constitutional amendment should be passed" (emphasis added).

However, despite the President's previous actions and statements indicating his strong support for a constitutional amendment to protect the flag, the President now believes that "efforts to limit the Bill of Rights. . . for flag desecration are misguided." This about face is especially troubling since the President personally enacted flag protection in Arkansas and tacitly agreed to his home state's resolution urging passage of constitutional flag-protection amendment. The President

led Americans to believe he was for the constitutional flag-protection amendment. Now the President wants Americans to believe that 80 percent of us are "misguided"?

Mr. President, at a time when you are asking Americans to unite behind our troops and our flag in Bosnia; at a time when 80 percent of Americans are voicing their support for the constitutional amendment, and 49 of 50 states are demanding approval of the constitutional amendment, could it be that *you* are "misguided"? Your record demands that you stop wavering and give a second look!

State of Arkansas

Senate Joint Resolution No. 6

On February 11, 1991, Arkansas became the eleventh of 49 states to "urge Congress of the United States to propose an amendment of the United States Constitution, for ratification by the states, specifying the Congress and the states shall have the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States." While Governor Clinton was not required to sign the legislation, he did nothing to defeat the resolution.

WHEREAS, although the right of free expression is part of the foundation of the United States Constitution, very carefully drawn limits on expression in specific instance have long been recognized as legitimate means of maintaining publican safety and decency as well as orderliness and productive value of public debate; and

WHEREAS, certain actions, although arguably related to one person's free expression nevertheless raise issues concerning public decency, public peace, and the rights of expressions and sacred values of others; and

WHEREAS, there are symbols of our national soul such as the Washington Monument, the United States Capitol Building, and memorials to our greatest leaders, which are the property of every American and are therefore worthy of protection from desecration and dishonor; and

WHEREAS, the American Flag to this day is a most honorable and worthy banner of a nation which is thankful for its strength and committee to curing its faults, and remains the destination of millions of immigrants attracted by the universal power of the American ideal; and

WHEREAS, the law as interpreted by the United States Supreme Court no longer accords to the Stars and Stripes the reverence, respect, and dignity befitting the banner of the that most noble experiment of a nation-state; and

WHEREAS, it is only fitting that people everywhere should lend their voices to a forceful call for restoration to the Stars and Stripes of a proper station under law and decency.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to propose an amendment to the United States Constitution, for ratification by the states, specifying that Congress and the states shall have the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

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